

I am writing today regarding H.B. 5140 AN ACT CONCERNING THE HAND-HARVESTING OF HORSESHOE CRABS IN THE STATE. I strongly favor a **complete ban** and believe anything less would be insufficient to allow the population of crabs to recover. I have been coordinating the counting / tagging of horseshoe crabs with Sacred Heart's Project Limulus program for over ten years in the Groton / Stonington area. In the early years we used to put out 2,000+ tags in a year often leaving twice that amount untagged. It wasn't unusual to tag 300 to 400 per night and count another 1,000 on the beach. And while the program has diminished in recent years due to resource issues, the past few years we've had difficulty finding enough horseshoe crabs to tag. [We were given less than 100 tags for the season the past few years.] There simply are not very many crabs remaining in our area of the sound.

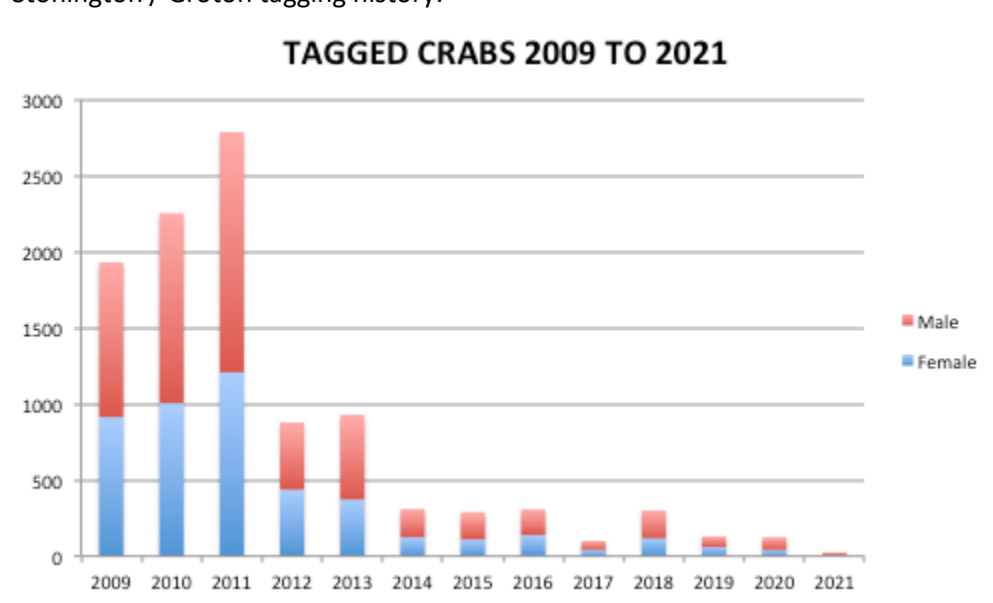
I also applaud the very stiff penalties proposed in the bill. Such penalties should provide a strong deterrent for illegal harvesting.

I urge my representative and senator to sign on as co-sponsors.

Thank you for consideration of this important legislation.

Rick Newton
Mystic

Stonington / Groton tagging history:



2012-2016 reduction not only due to declining crab numbers but also lower amount of tags distributed. The last three years [2019-2021] there has been a notable lack of available crabs to tag.